

This article was downloaded by: [University of Arizona]

On: 26 March 2012, At: 13:53

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Journal of International and Intercultural Communication

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjii20>

Direct and Mediated Intercultural Contact: Koreans' Attitudes toward U.S. Americans

Cheongmi Shim, Yan Bing Zhang & Jake Harwood

Available online: 19 Mar 2012

To cite this article: Cheongmi Shim, Yan Bing Zhang & Jake Harwood (2012): Direct and Mediated Intercultural Contact: Koreans' Attitudes toward U.S. Americans, Journal of International and Intercultural Communication, DOI:10.1080/17513057.2012.670715

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17513057.2012.670715>



PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Direct and Mediated Intercultural Contact: Koreans' Attitudes toward U.S. Americans

Cheongmi Shim, Yan Bing Zhang & Jake Harwood

Guided by the intergroup contact hypothesis, this study tested two models examining the associations among Korean young adults' consumption of U.S. dramas, direct contact with a U.S. American person, and their attitudes toward U.S. Americans in general. Results demonstrated that personal contact and mediated contact had a positive effect on intergroup attitudes, but that frequency of personal contact was a negative contributor. Mediated contact had different and stronger influences on participants' intergroup attitudes when they did not have personal contact with U.S. Americans. In addition, intergroup anxiety played a significant role in the contact modes and attitudes links.

Keywords: Direct and Mediated Intercultural Contact; Intergroup Attitudes; Parasocial Contact Hypothesis; U.S. Dramas; Koreans' Attitudes

The United States has been the dominant exporter of media content to the world, and the current media environment allows international audiences easy access to U.S. media products. Through diverse cable channels and particularly the Internet, South Korean viewers consume a substantial amount of media content from the United States. The Internet offers Koreans access to U.S. programs with minimal delay or cost. Despite geographic, linguistic, and cultural distance, Koreans have close contact with U.S. culture through media products, especially scripted U.S. TV programs. These programs, including dramas, comedies, sitcoms, and miniseries, are collectively

Cheongmi Shim (Ph.D., University of Kansas, 2010) is an Instructor at Bowling Green State University. Yan Bing Zhang (Ph.D., University of Kansas, 2002) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Kansas. Jake Harwood (Ph.D., University of California—Santa Barbara) is a Professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Arizona. This paper is based on the first author's dissertation under the direction of Yan Bing Zhang. An earlier version of this paper won a top paper award from the International and Intercultural Division at the 2010 annual conference of the National Communication Association, San Francisco, CA. Correspondence to Cheongmi Shim, Department of Communication, Bowling Green State University, 302 West Hall, Bowling Green, OH 43403-0234, USA. Email: cshim@bgsu.edu

called *Mid*—an abbreviation of “*Mi-Gook* dramas” (*Mi-Gook* is the Korean word for the United States). To Korean viewers, the term U.S. dramas refers to the broad range of scripted television programs produced and intended for original broadcast in the United States. Hence, in this paper, we use the term “U.S. dramas” to reflect Korean viewers’ use and understanding of them in the Korean cultural context.

U.S. dramas’ success in Korea has a long history—*Columbo*, *The Six Million Dollar Man*, *Wonder Woman*, *Hulk*, *V*, and *The X-files* were all big hits in Korea between the 1970s and early 1990s. However, during the same period, locally produced programming remained dominant. The inception of cable TV services in 1995 changed this dynamic, as cable channels started to import foreign content to fill their schedules (Shim, 2002). Although the South Korean government limited foreign-produced media content to 30 percent maximum of cable content (Shim, 2002), the volume of imported programs increased tremendously compared with the pre-cable era, hence increasing Koreans’ exposure to U.S. dramas. The Korean cable companies gained greater freedom to use foreign programs as a result of the U.S.–Korean 2006 Free Trade Agreement, which removed restrictions on U.S. media imports. Although the cable industry provided the initial impetus for U.S. dramas’ popularity in Korea, young viewers’ recent fascination with the shows can be attributed to ready access through the Internet. Lee and Rho’s study (2008), for example, showed that almost 60 percent of Koreans use the Internet to watch U.S. dramas, while only 38 percent use television.

The popularity of U.S. dramas in Korea and other locations raises questions about how such exposure affects attitudes toward U.S. American people and culture outside the U.S. Such questions can be usefully framed within the parasocial contact hypothesis (PCH) (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005, 2006). This hypothesis extends the traditional contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954), by suggesting that mediated contact with television characters from other groups can improve viewers’ attitudes toward outgroups as a whole. For example, Schiappa et al. found that mediated contact with gay characters had a positive effect on gay-straight intergroup relations in the U.S. context. The current study examines whether intergroup outcomes in the Korean–U.S. intercultural context support the PCH.

Along with mediated contact, opportunities for Koreans to experience direct intercultural contact with U.S. Americans have also increased substantially during the last decade. Over a million Koreans visited the United States in 2010, which nearly doubled the number in 2003 (International Trade Administration, 2010a). In addition, Korea is a popular destination for U.S. residents: 599,000 U.S. Americans visited in 2010 (International Trade Administration, 2010b). Educational institutions in the United States accepted 73,351 international students from Korea in 2010/11 (10.1 percent of the total: Institute of International Education, 2011a), while the number of U.S. students studying in South Korea has increased steadily to 2,137 during the year 2009/2010 (Institute of International Education, 2011b). As the number of sojourners in and out of the United States grows, examination of cross-national intergroup communication becomes more important. Guided by the contact hypothesis and intergroup contact theories (Allport, 1954; Islam & Hewstone, 1993), previous research

has demonstrated positive influences of direct contact on intergroup relations within and across cultural contexts. Therefore, this study's overarching purpose is to investigate the effects of Koreans' direct contact with U.S. Americans vis-à-vis mediated contact. Our simultaneous examination of direct and mediated contact effects allows us to compare the relative predictive power of those contact modes.

Intergroup Contact Theory

Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis emphasizes direct contact as an effective way to reduce prejudice and enhance positive attitudes toward other social groups, when this intergroup contact meets optimal conditions (equal status, cooperative interaction, acquaintance potential, and institutional support). The hypothesis has inspired extensive research in diverse intergroup contexts and has received conclusive empirical support in the last few decades (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Studies have shown that both quantity (frequency) and quality of intergroup contact enhance intergroup attitudes (Pettigrew, 1997) and increase perceived outgroup variability (Wolsko, Park, Judd, & Bachelor, 2003). Furthermore, Pettigrew (1997, 1998) argued that intergroup friendships represent many of the Allport's optimal contact conditions. The affective ties of intergroup friendships generate cross-group empathy, identification, and reappraisal of the ingroup (Pettigrew, 1997), and can override cognitive barriers (e.g., negative stereotypes, outgroup biases) and extend generalization to the group as a whole (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2004). Pettigrew's (1997) study demonstrated that intergroup friendships had a stronger effect on reducing outgroup prejudice than having outgroup members as coworkers or neighbors.

Intergroup anxiety has gained significant attention in studies of the contact effect (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). In particular, Gudykunst's (1985, 1993) anxiety/uncertainty management theory (AUM) provides a rationale for examining the critical role of anxiety in the contact-attitude relationship. Based on Stephan and Stephan's (1985) and Gudykunst's (1993) work, it has become clear that contact between groups can reduce anxiety, and reduced anxiety leads to more positive orientation towards outgroups in terms of behavioral (e.g., avoidance), cognitive (e.g., information processing biases), and affective (e.g., negative emotions) dimensions (Voci & Hewstone, 2003). In line with the intergroup contact theory and research on intergroup friendship and intergroup anxiety, we predict similar effects to extend to Koreans' contact with U.S. Americans. Hence, we pose the following hypotheses:

- H1: Korean participants' contact frequency with the U.S. American individual with whom they have the closest relationship will be positively associated with their affective and behavioral attitudes toward U.S. Americans.
- H2: Korean participants' contact quality with the U.S. American individual with whom they have the closest relationship will be positively associated with their affective and behavioral attitudes toward U.S. Americans.
- H3: The number of U.S. friends that Korean participants have will be positively associated with their affective and behavioral attitudes toward U.S. Americans.

- H4: Intergroup anxiety will mediate the relationship between Korean participants' direct contact with U.S. Americans and their affective and behavioral attitudes toward U.S. Americans generally.

Mediated Intergroup Contact and Parasocial Contact Hypothesis

Developing a meaningful relationship with a person from a different culture is not an easy task for many people; beyond anxiety concerns, both geographical distance and language barriers serve to make "real" contact difficult to achieve (Harwood, 2010). As stated in Turner, Crisp, and Lambert's (2007) discussion of extended and imagined contact, "one of the most significant recent advances in contact research is the finding that perceivers need not have actually experienced contact with the outgroup themselves to develop more positive intergroup attitudes" (p. 429). One alternative to direct intergroup contact is mediated contact.

As noted earlier, Schiappa et al.'s (2005, 2006) parasocial contact hypothesis (PCH) research shows that mediated contact with outgroup television character yields effects similar to direct contact, such as reduced prejudice. Their research demonstrated that increased viewing of and parasocial interaction with gay characters (in *Will & Grace*) were negatively correlated with sexual prejudice, an effect that was more pronounced for participants with less real life contact with homosexuals (see also Ortiz & Harwood, 2007). Mass mediated contact has the advantages of reaching large audiences simultaneously, of maintaining scripted control over the specific portrayal, and of bridging time and space. This latter point is critical in the international context, given the logistical issues in engaging in direct contact. Therefore, to consider PCH in an intercultural context, we examined the effect of quantity of mediated contact on intergroup attitudes:

- H5: Korean participants' viewing amount of U.S. dramas will be positively associated with their affective and behavioral attitudes toward U.S. Americans.

Although viewing amount is an important dimension measuring viewing quantity, it does not capture mediated contact quantity in terms of how many different shows viewers have watched. In fact, simple viewing aggregates have been criticized in the media effects literature (e.g., Bilandzic & Rössler, 2004). Woo and Dominick (2001) showed that viewers' overestimation of deviant behaviors (e.g., teen pregnancy, adultery) was predicted by daytime television talk show viewing rather than total television viewing. Given the diversity within U.S. television shows available to Korean audience, viewers' exposure to diverse U.S. dramas indicates their experience of more exemplars of U.S. Americans. As examined in direct contact studies, perceived outgroup variability was identified to have a positive relationship with favorable attitudes toward outgroup (e.g., Voci & Hewstone, 2003). Guided by prior studies of intergroup contact and genre-specific cultivation effects, we predict that viewing diversity will be a positive predictor of favorable intergroup attitudes:

H6: The diversity of Korean participants' viewing of U.S. dramas will be positively associated with their affective and behavioral attitudes toward U.S. Americans.

Horton and Wohl (1956) first introduced the concept of parasocial interaction and argued that viewers can develop an imagined friendship with a mediated persona and form an interpersonal relationship. Acknowledging that mediated relationships can involve significant social interaction, parasocial interaction research shows that viewers process mass-mediated parasocial interaction with others, including out-group members, in a way similar to interpersonal interaction (e.g., self-disclosure from a media character can build intimacy: Rubin & McHugh, 1987). We predict that parasocial interaction will be positively associated with favorable intergroup attitudes:

H7: Korean participants' parasocial interaction with their favorite U.S. drama characters will be positively related to their affective and behavioral attitudes toward U.S. Americans.

One of the major advantages of mediated contact is that it involves less anxiety than direct contact (Ortiz & Harwood, 2007; Turner et al., 2007). Direct intercultural contact often entails high uncertainty, fear of embarrassment, and frustration of misunderstanding. Indirect contact is expected to reduce such stress. In addition to mediated contact, other forms of indirect contact share this benefit: Paolini, Hewstone, Cairns, and Voci (2004) demonstrated that vicarious contact (a friend's intergroup friendship) can reduce intergroup anxiety, and Turner et al.'s (2007) experiment on *imagined* intergroup contact showed similar effects. The possibility for mass-mediated communication to reduce anxiety can also be found in Kim's (1995) integrative theory of immigrants' acculturation process: she argued that immigrants and sojourners in the United States use host mass media to reduce cultural uncertainty and anxiety, and facilitate the cultural adaptation processes. Therefore we predict a mediating role of intergroup anxiety in the relationship between mediated contact and intergroup attitudes:

H8: Intergroup anxiety will mediate the relationship between Korean participants' viewing behaviors of U.S. dramas and their affective and behavioral attitudes toward U.S. Americans.

We tested our eight hypotheses using structural equation modeling (SEM) of two hypothesized models. The mediated contact model (Figure 1) was tested for participants who *only* have mediated contact with U.S. Americans; it tests H5—H8. The direct and mediated contact model (Figure 2) was tested for participants who have had both direct and mediated contact with U.S. Americans; it tests all of the hypotheses.

Method

Participants

Three hundred participants were voluntarily recruited from six universities in four areas in South Korea (Seoul, Daegu, Daejeon, and Ansan) through several Korean

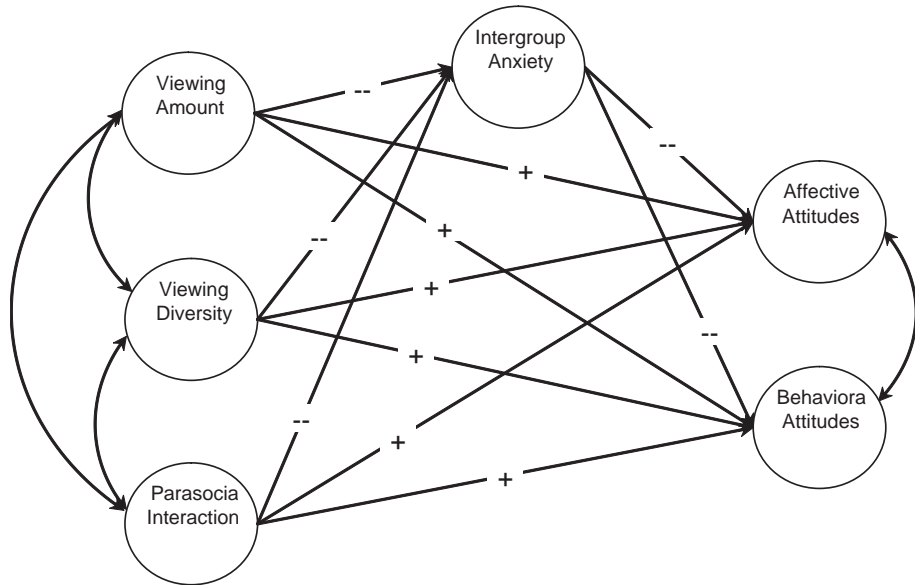


Figure 1 Hypothesized Model of Mediated Only Contact.

nationals serving as research assistants for the current project. Respondents were assured of anonymity. Participants finished the paper and pencil survey in Korean independently either individually or in small group settings with the presence of a research assistant.

Of the 300, 288 participants had watched U.S. dramas and were thus included in the current study. They were divided into two groups: Mediated only contact group ($N=181$; 44 males, 137 females, aged 19–40; M age = 23.58, $SD = 4.75$) which included the participants who had watched U.S. dramas but did not have direct contact with U.S. Americans; and Direct and mediated contact group ($N=107$; 57 males, 50 females aged 19–39; M age = 25.68, $SD = 4.71$) which included participants who had watched American dramas and had direct contact with at least one U.S. American person. The survey was created in English and translated into Korean. Back-translation from Korean to English was conducted by three Korean nationals fluent in English to ensure translation accuracy. Descriptive data and tests of differences for the two groups on all variables are shown in Table 1; correlations are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Measures

Contact frequency

Participants indicated how often they communicate with the U.S. American individual with whom they had the closest relationship on three 7-point scales (1 = *not frequently at all* and 7 = *very frequently*; $M=2.05$, $SD=1.31$, $\alpha=.86$ for Direct and mediated contact group; measures related to direct contact were not

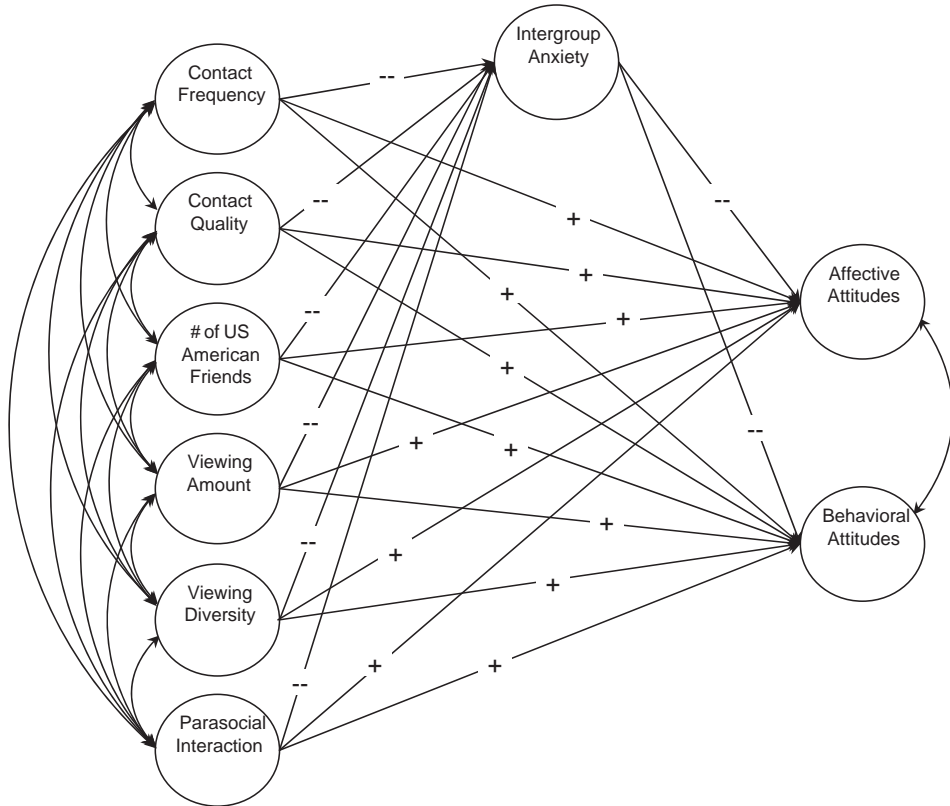


Figure 2 Hypothesized Model of Direct and Mediated Contact.

applicable to Mediated only contact group participants who had no such contact). Higher scores indicate more frequent communication. The items were adapted from Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern (2002): “How often do you talk to and engage in

Table 1 Mean Comparison Between Mediated Only and Direct and Mediated Contact Groups

	Group		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>r</i> ²
	Mediated only (<i>N</i> = 181)	Direct and mediated (<i>N</i> = 107)			
Viewing amount (minutes/week)	81.37 (128.77)	90.51 (180.99)	-0.48	265	.00
Viewing diversity	7.17 (6.17)	9.59 (8.99)	-2.69**	283	.02
Parasocial interaction	4.35 (1.26)	4.58 (1.35)	-1.49	284	.01
Intergroup anxiety	4.26 (.87)	3.71 (.87)	5.16***	280	.09
Affective attitude	4.03 (.82)	4.46 (.68)	-4.53***	285	.07
Behavioral attitude	4.79 (1.35)	5.29 (1.06)	-3.26**	285	.04

Note. Standard deviations appear in parentheses below means.

p* < .01. *p* < .001.

Table 2 Correlations Between Measures (Mediated Only Contact Group, $N = 181$)

Measure	Viewing amount	Viewing diversity	Parasocial interaction	Intergroup anxiety	Affective attitude	Behavioral attitude
Viewing amount	–					
Viewing diversity	0.46**	–				
Parasocial interaction	0.29**	0.30**	–			
Intergroup anxiety	0.03	0.03	–0.15*	–		
Affective attitude	0.01	0.09	0.31**	–0.49**	–	
Behavioral attitude	–0.08	0.20**	0.22**	–0.28**	0.52**	–

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

informal conversation with the person?,” “How often do you study or work together with this person?,” and “How often do you do things socially with this person, such as eating out, or going to movies?”.

Contact quality. Quality of direct contact with outgroup members was assessed with three items from Ortiz and Harwood’s (2007) six item measure of quality of contact and relational closeness. We selected the items that measured overall contact quality (“How much do you value the time that you have spent with this person?,” “How pleasant has your contact been with this person?,” and “How friendly has your contact been with this person?”) rather than relational closeness. Respondents were asked to consider one U.S. American person with whom they had the closest relationship and to indicate their contact quality on 7-point scales (1 = *not at all* and 7 = *a great deal*; $M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.35$, $\alpha = .85$ for Direct and mediated contact group). Higher scores indicate more positive contact quality.

Number of U.S. American friends. As a single item, participants indicated the number of U.S. American friends that they had on a 7-point scale (1 = *none* and 7 = *6 or more*; $M = 1.89$, $SD = 1.26$ for Direct and mediated contact group). This item was adapted from Pettigrew’s (1997) study which measured the number of outgroup friends based on three levels (0 = *none*, 1 = *few*, 2 = *many*). The current study added four more intervals to measure the specific number of U.S. American friends that Korean participants had.

Intergroup anxiety. We used a shortened version of Stephan and Stephan’s (1985) measure of intergroup anxiety, as used in recent studies (Turner et al., 2007; Voci &

Table 3 Correlations Between Measures (Direct and Mediated Contact Group, $N=107$)

Measure	Contact frequency	Contact quality	Number of U.S.-American friends	Viewing amount	Viewing diversity	Parasocial interaction	Intergroup anxiety	Affective attitude	Behavioral attitude
Contact frequency	–								
Contact quality	0.37**	–							
Number of U.S. American friends	0.47**	0.36**	–						
Viewing amount	0.47**	0.12	0.19	–					
Viewing diversity	0.15	–0.01	0.15	0.29**	–				
Parasocial interaction	0.16	0.06	0.09	0.26**	0.17	–			
Intergroup anxiety	–0.39**	–0.33**	–0.42**	–0.20	–0.19	–0.13	–		
Affective attitude	0.21*	0.23*	0.34**	0.10	0.12	0.36**	–0.34**	–	
Behavioral attitude	0.03	0.29**	0.24*	0.14	0.23*	0.22*	–0.24*	0.37**	–

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Hewstone, 2003). Six 7-point items (e.g., “I might feel awkward if I were to meet a U.S. American person”) measured participants’ anxiety in a hypothetical contact situation with a U.S. American person (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*; $\alpha = .69$ for Mediated only contact group; $\alpha = .69$ for Direct and mediated contact group). High scores indicate high anxiety.

Viewing amount. We asked participants to provide their best estimate of their total viewing amount (hours and minutes) of U.S. dramas via any media channels (i.e., Internet, television, or DVD) during a typical week.

Viewing diversity. We measured the total number of different U.S. dramas participants watched. Participants put a check mark beside each U.S. drama on a list of 60 titles that were shown across national TV networks and Cable TV in Korea during the time of data collection and listed other U.S. dramas they watched if they were not on the list.

Parasocial interaction. Schiappa, Allen, and Gregg’s (2007) meta-analysis identified social attractiveness and perceived realism of the character as the major aspects of parasocial interaction. We used six items from Rubin and Perse’s (1987) Parasocial Interaction scale to address those two dimensions (e.g., “I find the character to be attractive,” “The character is like a real person to me”). Participants were asked to consider their favorite U.S. drama character and indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each of the six statements (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*; $\alpha = .85$ for Mediated only contact group; $\alpha = .83$ for Direct and mediated contact group).

Affective attitudes. We assessed general positive-negative evaluations of U.S. Americans. This measurement was adapted from Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, and Ropp’s (1997) study. They constructed six items as bipolar adjective pairs separated by a 7-point scale (e.g., warm-cold, negative-positive, $\alpha = .90$) to measure participants’ general feelings about an outgroup. The current study used the same items in a Likert scale (e.g., “When I think of U.S. Americans, I feel positive”). Participants indicated how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each of the six statements (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*; $\alpha = .71$ for Mediated only contact group; $\alpha = .59$ for Direct and mediated contact group). Higher scores indicate more positive feelings toward U.S. Americans.

Behavioral attitudes. Behavioral attitudes assessed participants’ willingness to engage in diverse activities with outgroup members. Six items adapted from Cooke (1978) and Tropp (2003) measured participants’ attitudes (e.g., “I am willing to work with

U.S. Americans in the same team”) on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*; $a = .89$ for Mediated only contact group; $a = .82$ for Direct and mediated contact group). Higher scores indicate more positive behavioral attitudes.

Tests of Measurement Models

Before testing the hypothesized structural models, measurement models were tested. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the viability of the relationship between the indicators and latent factors for both models.

Mediated only contact group. This comprised six major variables constituted by two manifest variables (viewing amount and viewing diversity) and four latent constructs (parasocial interaction, intergroup anxiety, affective attitude, and behavioral attitude). Each latent construct had six items. Representative parcels were created to form three manifest indicators for each latent construct. Since each construct was measured with six items, the item-to-construct balanced parceling technique was used to determine which items could be combined (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002, p. 166). By averaging two items representing one parcel, each construct ended up with three indicators (parcels). The latent variance was set to 1.0 as the scale setting method. The initial freely estimated measurement model demonstrated acceptable fit ($\chi^2 (64, n = 181) = 448.19, p < .001, RMSEA = 0.077, NNFI = 0.94, CFI = 0.96$).

Direct and mediated contact group. The six variables used in the first model were treated in the same manner here. For the direct contact variables, the number of U.S. American friends was measured by a single item; contact frequency and contact quality were measured by three items respectively, resulting in nine major variables consisting of three manifest and six latent variables. Again, the latent variance was set to 1.0 as the scale setting method. The initial, freely estimated model demonstrated acceptable fit ($\chi^2 (156, n = 107) = 722.35, p < .001, RMSEA = 0.079, NNFI = 0.91, CFI = 0.93$).

Results

Mediated Only Contact Group

The hypothesized structural model (see Figure 1) was tested, and non-significant regression paths were sequentially removed from the model; viewing diversity–intergroup anxiety ($\beta = .06, p > .05$), viewing amount–affective attitudes ($\beta = -.01, p > .05$), and viewing diversity–affective attitudes ($\beta = .02, p > .05$), $\chi^2 (67, n = 181) = 450.73, p < .001, RMSEA = 0.076, NNFI = 0.94, CFI = 0.95$. The final structural model addresses H5–H8 (see Figure 3).

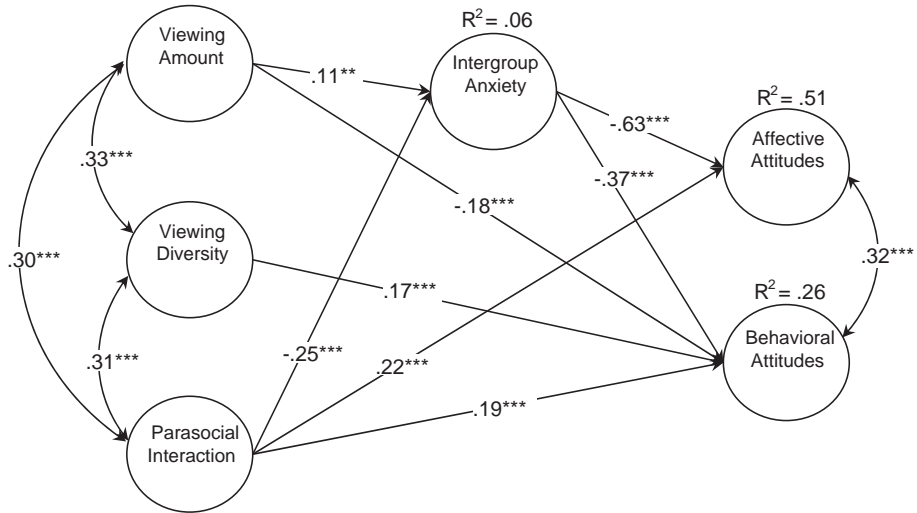


Figure 3 Structural Model of Mediated Only Contact (Standardized Solution). Model Fit: $\chi^2 (67, n = 181) = 450.729, p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.076, NNFI = 0.94, CFI = 0.95. Values Reported Are Standardized, and Only Significant Paths Are Reported. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Hypothesis 5, which predicted a positive association between Korean participants' viewing amount of U.S. dramas and their affective and behavioral attitudes toward U.S. Americans, was not supported. On the contrary, viewing amount was a significant negative predictor of behavioral attitudes, and failed to directly predict affective attitudes. Hypothesis 6, which predicted a positive association between Korean participants' viewing diversity of American dramas and their affective and behavioral attitudes toward Americans, was partially supported. Viewing diversity had a significant direct positive association with behavioral attitudes, but did not predict affective attitudes. Hypothesis 7, which predicted a positive association between Korean participants' parasocial interaction with their favorite U.S. drama character and their affective and behavioral attitudes toward U.S. Americans, was supported. Lastly, Hypothesis 8 predicted that intergroup anxiety would mediate the relationships between viewing of U.S. dramas and attitudes toward U.S. Americans. Viewing amount and parasocial interaction showed significant indirect paths mediated by intergroup anxiety to the outcome variables: intergroup anxiety increased as viewing amount increased and decreased as parasocial interaction increased; in turn, intergroup anxiety had negative effects on affective attitudes and behavioral attitudes. Hence, Hypothesis 8 was partially supported, but the indirect effect of viewing amount was in opposite direction to that predicted: more viewing was associated with increased anxiety. Parasocial interaction and viewing amount explained 6 percent of the variance in intergroup anxiety. All of the significant predictors (including anxiety, the mediator) explained 51 percent of the variance in affective attitudes and 26 percent of the variance in behavioral attitudes. Controlling

for the effects of intergroup anxiety, the direct paths between the mediated contact variables and the intergroup attitudes measures remained significant.

Direct and Mediated Contact Group

The hypothesized structural model (see Figure 2) was tested, and non-significant regression paths were sequentially removed from the model. The structural model showed that viewing diversity was not significantly associated with intergroup anxiety ($\beta = -.06, p > .05$) or with intergroup attitudes ($\beta = .05, p > .05$ for affective attitude; $\beta = -.05, p > .05$ for behavioral attitude), $\chi^2 (150, n = 107) = 649.502, p < .001, RMSEA = 0.075, NNFI = 0.93, CFI = 0.94$. Viewing diversity was eliminated to maximize model parsimony. The final model showed acceptable model fit (see Figure 4) and addresses H1–H8.

Hypothesis 1, which predicted a positive association between contact frequency with the closest U.S. American individual and their affective and behavioral attitudes toward U.S. Americans, was not supported. Contact frequency was not a significant

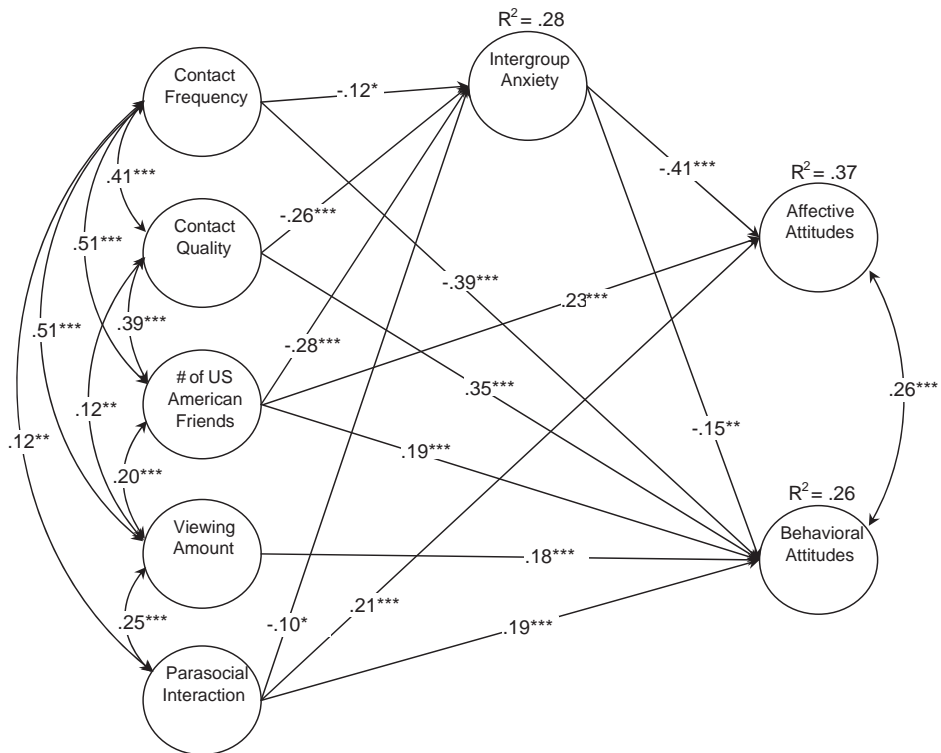


Figure 4 Structural Model of Direct and Mediated Contact (Standardized Solution). Model Fit: $\chi^2 (150, n = 107) = 649.502, p < .001, RMSEA = 0.075, NNFI = 0.93, CFI = 0.94$. Values Reported Are Standardized, and Only Significant Paths Are Reported. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

predictor of affective attitudes ($\beta = -.001, p > .05$); and it was negatively associated with behavioral attitudes. Hypothesis 2, which predicted a positive association between Korean participants' contact quality with a U.S. American individual with whom they had the closest relationship and their affective and behavioral attitudes toward U.S. Americans, was partially supported. Contact quality did not have any significant relationship with affective attitudes ($\beta = .09, p > .05$) but showed a positive association with behavioral attitudes. Hypothesis 3, which predicted a positive association between the number of U.S. friends and Korean participants' attitudes toward U.S. Americans was supported.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that intergroup anxiety would mediate the relationships between direct contact with U.S. American persons and attitudes toward U.S. Americans. All three direct contact variables showed significant mediation: intergroup anxiety decreased as the number of U.S. American friends increased, as contact frequency increased, and as direct contact quality increased; in turn, intergroup anxiety had negative associations with affective and behavioral attitudes. Overall, intergroup anxiety functioned as a partial mediator between the three direct contact variables and behavioral attitudes and a full mediator of the relationships between communication frequency and quality and affective attitudes.

Hypothesis 5 was partially supported: viewing amount was a positive predictor of behavioral attitudes and failed to predict affective attitudes ($\beta = -.07, p > .05$). Hypothesis 6 was not supported: viewing diversity did not show a significant association with both of the attitude dimensions. Hypothesis 7 was supported. Parasocial interaction positively predicted both attitude measures. Finally, Hypothesis 8 tested the mediation effect of intergroup anxiety, and only parasocial interaction showed a significant indirect path mediated by intergroup anxiety: intergroup anxiety decreased as parasocial interaction increased; in turn, intergroup anxiety had negative associations with affective and behavioral attitudes. Overall, direct contact variables and parasocial interaction explained 28 percent of variance in intergroup anxiety; intergroup anxiety and the set of significant contact predictors accounted for substantial variance in affective (37 percent) and behavioral (26 percent) attitudes.

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the associations between Korean viewers' direct and mediated contact with U.S. Americans and their attitudes toward U.S. Americans in general. Grounded in the intergroup contact perspective, we examined the associations between mediated and direct contact and measures of intergroup attitudes.

For the participants who had not had direct contact with U.S. Americans, the mediated contact variables accounted for a significant part of their attitudes toward U.S. Americans. Parasocial interaction was a strong and positive predictor of both dimensions of intergroup attitudes and a negative predictor of intergroup anxiety. These findings supported the parasocial contact hypothesis in the Korean–U.S.

American intercultural context. However, contrary to the prediction, viewing amount was negatively related to behavioral attitudes and positively related to intergroup anxiety. Kang, Kim, Noh, Kim, and Shin's (2008) examination of how Korean viewers evaluate U.S. dramas can shed light on these results. They show that Korean viewers feel discomfort and negative emotions due to perceived ethnocentrism or racism in U.S. dramas. However, such feelings did not make the viewers stop watching the dramas—they actually enhanced their entertainment value. Similarly, sex or violence on the dramas plays a significant role in attracting Korean viewers to the shows, but does not enhance evaluations of characters. Tan, Dalisay, Zhang, Han, and Merchant's (2010) recent study of Korean high school students suggested that viewers' stereotypes (positive or negative) of an outgroup are likely to follow their evaluation of how the outgroup members are portrayed in the media, especially when the media portrayals are perceived to be real and believable. Therefore, the current study's result can be explained, to a great extent, by Korean viewers' negative judgment of the characters, which in turn became the basis of their real-life judgment of U.S. Americans. It should also be noted that the zero-order correlations between amount of viewing and the anxiety and attitudes measures are not significant. Thus, viewing quantity only gains its apparent negative significance when other variables (e.g., parasocial interaction) are controlled, suggesting that it is residual viewing of *disfavored* characters that may account for this effect.

For those participants who had both direct and mediated contact with U.S. Americans, the direct and mediated contact model demonstrated that both types of contact played a significant role in predicting the participants' intergroup attitudes. Contact frequency was positively correlated with contact quality, indicating that more frequent intergroup contact is associated with more positive cross-cultural interpersonal relationships. That said, contrary to the prediction, contact frequency was negatively associated with behavioral attitudes. This association results from the fact that most U.S.–Korean friendships in our dataset were moderately high quality ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.35$ on a 1–7 scale) and relatively low frequency ($M = 2.05$, $SD = 1.31$, 1–7 scale), as is typical of most Koreans' contact with U.S. Americans in Korea. For Koreans, communication with U.S. Americans can be a strenuous process. In most cases, Koreans are required to accommodate their U.S. partner's language needs during interaction. Such pressure can function as a stressor and is likely to discourage engaging with U.S. Americans in diverse social contexts. Molinsky (2007) pointed out that cross-cultural code-switching can be “draining and depleting as it can threaten an individual's face and sense of efficacy, resulting in embarrassment and performance anxiety” (p. 627). Therefore, many Koreans may try to avoid such stressful situations. Notably, the negative association with attitudes is not apparent in the zero-order correlations. Thus, it reflects the effects of residual frequency, controlling for quality of contact. Perhaps unsurprisingly, more frequent contact independent of quality appears not to have positive effects.

Results also indicated that the number of U.S. American friends was positively associated with Korean participants' attitudes toward U.S. Americans, supporting Pettigrew's (1998) view that intergroup friendship enhances contact effects. However,

the descriptive statistics showed that participants in this study have an average of about one U.S. American friend, suggesting challenges to establishing large networks of intergroup friendships.

The mediated contact variables in the second model were significant positive predictors of participants' attitudes toward U.S. Americans. Viewing amount had a positive association with behavioral attitudes toward U.S. Americans—the opposite of the first model. The participants' direct contact experience with U.S. Americans may help the viewers interpret media messages more critically. This explanation is supported by Bilandzic's (2006) propositions on personal and mediated experience and cultivation processes. She argued that viewers with relevant real-life experience of situations and events portrayed on television are less likely to be persuaded by media messages than those who do not have direct experience. Hence, exaggerated characters in U.S. dramas may have relatively weak influence on the Korean viewers with direct contact experience with U.S. Americans. Similar to the mediated contact only model, parasocial interaction was a strong and positive predictor both of participants' affective and behavioral attitudes. It is intriguing to see the powerful effect of parasocial interaction with the viewers' favorite television character in their intergroup attitudes regardless of direct contact experience. While direct contact quality or viewing amount did not show direct connection with affective attitudes, parasocial interaction showed a strong association with affective attitudes. Supporting Tropp and Pettigrew's (2004) arguments concerning the central role of affect, favorable emotions developed from parasocial relationship with a certain U.S. drama character have a strong effect on the viewers' feelings about the entire outgroup.

Finally, the mediating role of intergroup anxiety in both models was examined. Intergroup anxiety functioned as either a partial or full mediator for the mediated or direct contact variables in predicting intergroup attitudes, demonstrating anxiety's critical role in the contact–attitudes relationship. In our second model, direct contact showed a stronger relationship with intergroup anxiety than mediated contact, presumably because it is more immediate and “real.” Communication frequency, which showed a negative association with behavioral attitudes, was conducive to reducing intergroup anxiety. Thus, there is a clear difference between direct and mediated contact as far as anxiety is concerned. For participants who had both types of contact, direct contact played a stronger role in reducing intergroup anxiety. However, for those who had no direct contact, parasocial contact was effective in reducing intergroup anxiety. Table 1 shows the overall comparison in the mediated contact and intergroup attitude variables across the two groups. It suggests substantially more positive affective and behavioral attitudes among those who have access to both forms of contact, illustrating the additional positive effects of direct contact on intergroup anxiety and intergroup attitudes: direct contact explains an additional 9 percent of the variance in intergroup anxiety, 7 percent in affective attitude, and 4 percent in behavioral attitude (see Table 1).

Implications

Direct contact in intercultural contexts entails many challenges, such as language barriers, geographic/cultural distance, and inadequate contact opportunities. These challenges escalate intergroup anxiety and decrease motivations to interact with outgroup members. Our data demonstrate that media can overcome such barriers. This merging of intercultural, contact, and media research is a new direction for future research. With this century's advances in communications technology, the impact of mediated intercultural contact on attitudes toward geographically distant social/cultural groups should not be underestimated. The Internet offers endless opportunities for audiences to access foreign media content such as the scripted TV shows that we examined. Although fictional in nature, such shows are a rich, entertaining, and powerful source of information about U.S. culture that encourage repeated viewing, emotional engagement, and identification with the characters (Perse & Rubin, 1989; Rubin & McHugh, 1987). The involvement with the characters (and associated parasocial interaction) had a strong impact on intergroup attitudes, as suggested by Schiappa et al. (2006).

Our findings suggest practical applications for media content in enhancing intercultural relations. However, the results suggest that frequent contact or heavy viewing alone cannot yield positive outcomes for intergroup attitudes, thus challenging a generally optimistic view of contact amount in intergroup contact theory. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) argued that "factors that curb contact's ability to reduce prejudice are now the most problematic theoretically, yet the least understood" (p. 767), encouraging scholarly attention beyond Allport's positive contact conditions (Paolini, Harwood, & Rubin, 2010). Our results support the need to focus on specific contact conditions that yield adverse effects in direct and mediated contact modes, notably: (a) more contact is not better when that contact is of mediocre quality, and (b) more media consumption is not helpful when the media portrayal is negative, and there is no counterbalancing interpersonal contact.

Limitations and Future Research

Driven by intergroup contact theory, this study focused on quantity and quality aspects of contact, intergroup anxiety, and intergroup attitudes as major variables, and examined the association among them. However, when it comes to direct contact in an intercultural context, it is important to consider communication language as a variable. As noted earlier, linguistic accommodation can function as a stressor which reduces the motivation for and enjoyment of intergroup contact, at least in part as a function of intergroup anxiety (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Also, our study did not consider the perceived *typicality* of the television characters or the interpersonal contacts. In Hewstone and Brown's (1986); Brown & Hewstone, 2005) intergroup contact model, positive changes in outgroup perceptions occur when the contacted outgroup members are regarded as typical or representative of the group, and more attention to this variable is needed. Future work could also consider whether and

when mediated contact serves as a precursor to direct contact (Harwood, 2010), and whether media contact serves to enhance language-learning motivations (Harwood & Vincze, 2011).

Methodologically, SEM is a large-sample technique, particularly when a model is complicated. Kline (2011) suggested 200 cases as a typical sample size, but our second model was analyzed with fewer cases. Although both models show acceptable fit, the stability of the second model may have a problematic ratio of sample size to parameters. In terms of sampling, we note the gender disparity in the first group—future work should examine why such gender differences might emerge, and whether contact's effects differ across gender groups.

This study extended intergroup contact theory to the mediated intercultural context. The findings simultaneously support and challenge the theory. We hope that our two models of mediated and direct intergroup contact enhance understanding of the role of mediated contact vis-à-vis direct contact in shaping outgroup attitudes. We invite further investigation in different intercultural contexts.

References

- Allport, G.W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. New York: Addison-Wesley.
- Bilandzic, H. (2006). The perception of distance in the cultivation process: A theoretical consideration of the relationship between television content, processing experience, and perceived distance. *Communication Theory*, 16, 333–355.
- Bilandzic, H., & Rössler, P. (2004). Life according to television. Implications of genre-specific cultivation effects: The gratification/cultivation model. *Communications*, 29, 295–326.
- Brown, R., & Hewstone, M. (2005). An integrative theory of intergroup contact. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 37, 255–343.
- Cooke, M.A. (1978). A pair of instruments for measuring student attitudes toward bearers of the target culture. *Foreign Language Annals*, 11, 149–163.
- Gudykunst, W.B. (1985). A model of uncertainty reduction in intercultural contexts. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 4, 401–413.
- Gudykunst, W.B. (1993). Toward a theory of effective interpersonal and intergroup communication: An anxiety/uncertainty management perspective. In R.L. Wiseman & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural communication competence* (pp. 33–71). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Harwood, J. (2010). The contact space: A novel framework for intergroup contact research. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 29, 147–177.
- Harwood, J., & Vincze, L. (2011). Mediating second language learning and intergroup contact in a bilingual setting. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 32, 377–386.
- Hewstone, M., & Brown, R. (1986). Contact is not enough: An intergroup perspective on the 'Contact Hypothesis. In M. Hewstone & R. Brown (Eds.), *Contact and conflict in intergroup encounters* (pp. 1–44). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Horton, D., & Wohl, R.R. (1956). Mass communication and para-social interaction. Observations on intimacy at distance. *Psychiatry*, 19, 215–229.
- Institute of International Education (2011a). Top 25 places of origin of international students, 2009/10–2010/11. *Open doors report on international educational exchange*. Retrieved from <http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/International-Students/Leading-Places-of-Origin/2009–11>
- Institute of International Education (2011b). Open doors fact sheet: South Korea. *Open doors report on international educational exchange*. Retrieved from <http://www.iie.org/Research-and->

Publications/Open-Doors/Data/Fact-Sheets-by-Country/~/media/Files/Corporate/Open-Doors/Fact-Sheets-2011/Country/South%20Korea%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20Open%20Doors%202011.ashx

- International Trade Administration (2010a). *2010 market profile: South Korea*. Office of travel and tourism industries. Retrieved from http://tinet.ita.doc.gov/outreachpages/download_data_table/2010_South_Korea_Market_Profile.pdf
- International Trade Administration (2010b). *2010 United States resident travel abroad*. Office of travel and tourism industries. Retrieved from http://tinet.ita.doc.gov/outreachpages/download_data_table/2010_US_Travel_Abroad.pdf
- Islam, M. R., & Hewstone, M. (1993). Dimensions of contact as predictors of intergroup anxiety, perceived out-group variability, and out-group attitude: An integrative model. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *19*, 700–710.
- Kang, J.S., Kim, D.H., Noh, C.H., Kim, J.E., & Shin, S.M. (2008). Phenomenological study on increased preference to American TV drama. *Korean Journal of Broadcasting*, *21*, 44–79.
- Kim, Y. (1995). Cross-cultural adaptation: An integrative theory. In: R. Wiseman (Ed.), *International and intercultural communication annual*. Vol. 19 (pp. 170–193). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kline, R.B. (2011). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling* (3rd ed.). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Lee, J.S., & Rho, D.H. (2008). The effect of viewing motivations on media choice and use. *Korean Journal of Broadcasting*, *22*, 246–286.
- Little, T.D., Cunningham, W.A., Shahar, G., & Widaman, K.F. (2002). To parcel or not to parcel: Exploring the question, weighing the merits. *Structural Equation Modeling*, *9*, 151–173.
- Molinsky, A. (2007). Cross-cultural code-switching: The psychological challenges of adapting behavior in foreign cultural interactions. *Academy of Management Review*, *32*, 622–640.
- Ortiz, M., & Harwood, J. (2007). A social cognitive theory approach to the effects of mediated intergroup contact on intergroup attitudes. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *51*, 615–631.
- Paolini, S., Harwood, J., & Rubin, M. (2010). Negative intergroup contact makes group memberships salient: Explaining why intergroup conflict endures. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *36*, 1723–1738.
- Paolini, S., Hewstone, M., Cairns, E., & Voci, A. (2004). Effects of direct and indirect cross-group friendships on judgments of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland: The mediating role of an anxiety-reduction mechanism. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *30*, 770–786.
- Perse, E.M., & Rubin, R.B. (1989). Attribution in social and parasocial relationship. *Communication Research*, *16*, 59–77.
- Pettigrew, T.F. (1997). Generalized intergroup contact effects on prejudice. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *23*, 173–186.
- Pettigrew, T.F. (1998). Intergroup contact theory. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *49*, 65–85.
- Pettigrew, T.F., & Tropp, L.R. (2006). A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *90*, 751–783.
- Rubin, A.M., & Perse, E.M. (1987). Audience activity and soap opera involvement. *Human Communication Research*, *14*, 246–268.
- Rubin, R.B., & McHugh, M.P. (1987). Development of parasocial interaction relationships. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *31*, 279–292.
- Schiappa, E., Allen, M., & Gregg, P.B. (2007). Parasocial relationships and television: A meta-analysis of the effects. In R. Preiss, B. Gayle, N. Burrell, M. Allen, & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Mass media research: Advances through meta-analysis* (pp. 301–314). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Schiappa, E., Gregg, P.B., & Hewes, D.E. (2005). The parasocial contact hypothesis. *Communication Monographs*, *72*, 92–115.

- Schiappa, E., Gregg, P.B., & Hewes, D.E. (2006). Can one TV show make a difference?: Will & Grace and the parasocial contact hypothesis. *Journal of Homosexuality, 51*, 15–37.
- Shim, D. (2002). South Korean media industry in the 1990s and the economic crisis. *Prometheus, 20*, 337–350.
- Spencer-Rodgers, J., & McGovern, T. (2002). Attitudes toward the culturally different: The role of intercultural communication barriers, affective responses, consensual stereotypes, and perceived threat. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 26*, 609–631.
- Stephan, W.G., & Stephan, C.W. (1985). Intergroup anxiety. *Journal of Social Issues, 41*, 157–175.
- Tan, A., Dalisay, F., Zhang, Y., Han, E., & Merchant, M.M. (2010). A cognitive processing model of information source use and stereotyping: African-American stereotypes in South Korea. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 54*, 569–587.
- Tropp, L.R. (2003). The psychological impact of prejudice: Implications for intergroup contact. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations, 5*, 131–149.
- Tropp, L.R., & Pettigrew, T.F. (2004). Intergroup contact and the central role of intergroup prejudice. In L.Z. Tiedens & C.W. Leach (Eds.), *The social life of emotions* (pp. 246–269). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Turner, R.N., Crisp, R.J., & Lambert, E. (2007). Imagining intergroup contact can improve intergroup attitudes. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations, 10*, 427–441.
- Voci, A., & Hewstone, M. (2003). Intergroup contact and prejudice toward immigrants in Italy: The mediational role of anxiety and the moderational role of group salience. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations, 6*, 37–54.
- Wolsko, C., Park, B., Judd, C.M., & Bachelor, J. (2003). Intergroup contact: Effects on group evaluations and perceived variability. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations, 6*, 93–110.
- Woo, H.J., & Dominick, J. (2001). Daytime television talk shows and the cultivation effect among U.S. and international students. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 45*, 598–615.
- Wright, S.C., Aron, A., McLaughlin-Volpe, T., & Ropp, S.A. (1997). The extended contact effect: Knowledge of cross-group friendships and prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 73*, 73–90.